Guide – Eligibility for exemption from ethics review

Some research may be eligible for exemption from ethics review (National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 5.1.15).

The Darling Downs Health (DDH) Human Research Ethics Committee has established the following guidelines on what may be accepted as research exempt from ethical review within DDH. Research that **may** be eligible for exemption includes projects that carry a lower risk to participants or the community **and** meet one or more of the following conditions:

Condition 1

The research uses only information that is **publicly available** through a mechanism set out by legislation or regulation that is protected by law.

Examples
- Mandatory reporting information
- Information obtained from registries of births and deaths
- Coronial investigations
- Reports of the Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Condition 2

The research is restricted to surveys and observation of public behaviour using information that was or will be collected and recorded **without personal identifiers** and is highly unlikely to cause distress to anyone associated with the information or the outcomes of the research.

Examples
- Negligible/low risk prospective research e.g. anonymous online survey

Condition 3

The research involves the use of collections of information or data from which all personal identifiers have been removed **prior to being received by the researchers** and where researchers explicitly agree:
- Not to attempt to re-identify those with whom the information nor data is associated;
- To take all reasonable steps to prevent re-identification of the information nor data for unauthorised purposes or access to the information or data by those who are not authorised; and
- That any sharing of any research data during or after the project will not create any additional risks of re-identification of the information or data.

Examples
- Queensland Government aggregate data e.g. Statistical Services Branch